

The Old Paths

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"Answering A Letter About Apostasy"

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I received a letter from a woman asking about the impossibility of apostasy. She believes that once a person has been saved, he can never be lost in Hell regardless of what he may or may not do. She wrote me and asked my position on this. The portion of her letter pertaining to the impossibility of apostasy, and my answer are below for your study. Please study these verses that you might know the will of God (Acts 17:11; II Tim. 2:15).

Her letter to me:

... Resting the doctrine of eternal security on one scripture passage tears my heart open. II Peter 2:20-21. To think that someone is considered a christian because he has the knowledge of Christ or having known the way of righteousness is ludicrous. If Peter meant saved bretheren why didn't he state so clearly? I have witnessed to countless people throughout my 19 years as born again christian. Many have received Christ but there have been many that have rejected the truth, they now have the knowledge of Christ and they absolutley know the way of righteousness, but they are lost and without hope. Trying to win these people only becomes harder and harder as their heart turns further from what they know. I'm am 100 percent certain that this is what Peter (actually God) is saying to us. What scares me is the fact that if you believe you can

lose your salvation, what kind of partial salvation do you have. "Not everyone who says 'Lord Lord'..." if you catch my drift. You know what Ephesians 2:8-9 says. Will you not be boasting to God that you were able to keep yourself from sinning whatever sin it was that was going to take your salvation away??? food for thought. By the way John 10:27-30 clearly states it is Gods job to keep you saved not yours. Read the Lords prayer in the Garden. (its not your job). With Love,

My response:

Hello,

Concerning your letter, you said, **"Resting the doctrine of eternal security on one scripture passage tears my heart open. II Peter 2:20-21."**how many times does God have to say something before it is true? If we can find one passage in the New Testament that teaches that a Christian can sin and fall from grace, then the rest of the New Testament must harmonize. There is no contradiction in the Bible.

Further you state, **"If Peter meant saved bretheren why didn't he state so clearly?"** With all due respect, how much clearer did Peter have to be than to speak of those who *"have escaped the pollutions of this world"*? This is not speaking of someone who merely heard the truth and then rejected it outright. This is speaking of one who is a Christian. Notice that Peter says, *"they are again entangled"* (v. 20). One could not become *"again entangled"* if they had never been **untangled**, could they?

Therefore, the ones under consideration were those who had become Christians, untangled from this world, but then have become *"again entangled AND OVER-COME."* These people, at one point, knew the *"way of righteousness"* but they *"turned from the holy commandment."* This is not speaking of one who was never a Christian, for one who has never been a Christian hasn't turned TO the holy commandment, yet.

Again, you say, **"What scares me is the fact that if you believe you can lose your salvation, what kind of partial salvation do you have. "Not everyone who says 'Lord Lord'..." if you catch my drift."** Yes, I catch your drift. Now, if someone starts off right, doing the Lord's will (Matt. 7:21), but stops and starts following his own way instead of the *"way of righteousness"* (II Peter. 2:20), what then? Will he be saved, anyway? If someone turns their back on the Lord, after having been a "born again Christian" for some time, what then? Will God have to just shrug His shoulders and accept that person, anyway? Concerning partial salvation, I have no knowledge of that. The Bible talks of salvation (Titus 2), and that is what I have.

"You know what Ephesians 2:8-9 says. Will you not be boasting to God that you were able to keep yourself from sinning whatever sin it was that was going to take your salvation away???" No, I will not boast. I have no room for boasting, for *"when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which is our duty to do"* (Lk. 17:10). When we do exactly and only what God says, we have no room for boasting in any form. I can avoid sin through the help of Almighty God (I Cor. 10:13), and not by my own power.

“By the way John 10:27-30 clearly states it is Gods job to keep you saved not yours.” I have read John 10:27-30 just as you suggested, but found no statement akin to what you said. The words “hear,” and “follow” are verbs of action (v. 27). Christ is saying that one who continues to “hear my voice” and continues to “follow me” are those who have eternal life. Now, what if one stops hearing Christ? What if one stops following His word? Are they saved, anyway? If one is lost in Hell, is it God’s fault? Remember: II Peter 3:9.

“Food for thought.” Let me give you some food for thought concerning whether or not a Christian can so sin as to be lost in Hell. Besides II Peter 2:20-21, which we have discussed, consider and study the following:

1) Paul wrote to the Galatian CHRISTIANS and said: “*Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace*” (Gal. 5:4).

2) Jesus said: “*If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free*” (Jn. 8:31-32). What if one does not continue in His word? What of those DISCIPLES in John 6:66?

3) Paul said: “*But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway*” (I Cor. 9:27).

4) Paul wrote to the Galatian CHRISTIANS and said: “*Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted*” (Gal. 6:1). Why would he be worried about this if it is impossible for a Christian to so sin as to be lost? Why is he concerned if, as you

said, it is God's job to keep you saved?

5) Paul told Timothy: “*Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils*” (I Tim. 4:1). Now, when one departs from the faith, will he go to Heaven or Hell? Remember, you cannot depart from a place you are not. (They could not “depart from the faith” unless they are a part of “the faith,” i.e., Christians.)

6) Paul told Timothy that some: “*Having damnation, because they have cast off their first faith..... For some are already turned aside after Satan*” (I Tim. 5:12, 15). Doesn't this explain it very clearly? Some had cast off their first faith (i.e., Christians) and faced damnation. Need we consider any more? Isn't this the exact thing that Peter was saying in II Peter 2:20-21? Of course, it is.

7) The Holy Spirit says: “*Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God*” (Heb. 3:12). Again, one cannot depart from God unless he/she had been in a close relationship with Him (i.e., Christians). This is a warning of what could happen if they were not careful.

I hope that these passages will help you in your study. Please feel

free to write back, and in your next letter, ... tell me what you did to become a “born again Christian” as you so state.

Have a good day.

Addendum: The woman wrote me back one more time. In her letter, she never discussed a single Scripture I presented. In fact, she made the point of saying she would not use any Scripture. Her attitude was that we ought to just “agree to disagree.” Sadly, I have not heard from her since.

Brethren, there are still many people honestly searching for the truth. Let us be aware and searching for them. Jesus met some who refused His teaching (Jn. 2:24-25, 6:64). Yet, this did not stop Him from preaching the word to whomever would listen (Lk. 19:10; I Tim. 1:15). Jesus taught the parable of the sower (Matt. 13) for this reason. Yes, there are those who are searching for people to justify their beliefs; but there are many more searching for the truth.

With this in mind, let us open our Bibles, and open our mouths to speak and teach the truth to friends, loved ones, and even strangers with whom we come in contact every day (II Tim. 2:2).

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